

THE MENSTRUUM



19: MORAL FIBRE

BY ROBERT LUKINS

The trouble is, see, I've got wasps.

I don't know how they're getting in – I'm worried there's a nest in the roof. Every day, in my second room, I'm reduced to flouncing about from wall to wall, flailing on a chair, waving about a rolled-up magazine in the undignified hope of squishing the guts from these stinging and unwelcome little buggers. I'd leave them be, I really would, but I'm allergic. They're beautiful things, but I'm not-very-quietly terrified.

Seemingly unconcerned and certainly unwilling to give coverage to this territorial battle raging on their doorstep, the 02/03/2011 edition of the *Herald Sun* instead chose to include an article penned by Wayne Flower headed *Graffiti vandal's 'art'*

on show at Cat Food Press, East Brunswick.

The piece went on to decry an exhibition featuring contributions from street artist Lush. Lush was alternately described as a "graffiti vandal", "masked vandal", "brazen vandal" and "bong smoking vandal" who had been "terrorising the western suburbs". Declined comment from Lush, Cat Food Press, police representatives, and even gab-happy Lord Mayor Robert Doyle, Wayne Flower thought it prudent to instead quote a lone and "worried" Altona North resident who had sent the Hun an email; describing Lush's "trail of destruction" through Werribee and surrounds, he concludes, "This loser is all that's wrong with this country. Work hard, get attacked. Be a criminal loser and you are an internet superstar."

Lush's work is divisive even within the graffiti community, with it commonly employing pornography

and violence as subjects of humour. Its place in the wider community, and further to that, as art, is something that should rightly be deliberated, but this article, this assemblage of words by Wayne Flower, is an ugly thing.

The validity or otherwise of street art is something to be considered within a coherent and thoughtful discussion; something the *Herald Sun* is not here taking part in.

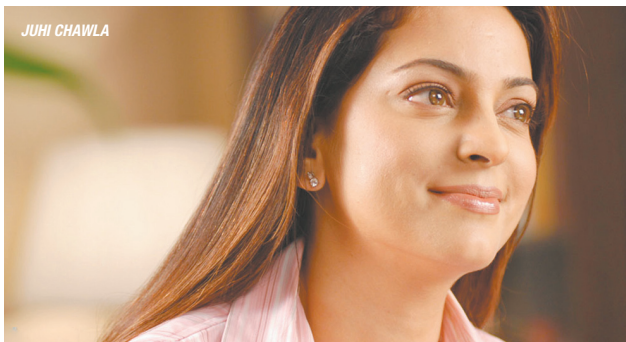
Moving beyond the article's factual errors in regard to the nature and content of the exhibition at Cat Food Press – an exhibition primarily of works by Zonk Vision, a group to which Lush is not directly affiliated – a more damaging issue is raised. This journalism isn't lazy, it's malicious. It is actively appealing to that part in all of us that is afraid, by its misrepresentations and its empty and ignoble slogans.

Sunday morning, another wasp whacked, I walk to my nearby servo where the sympathetic attendant gives me an unsold newspaper from earlier in the week. Necking a coffee, I return home, to my second room, and wait for the caffeine to weave its laxative magic. I decide to make some art of my own, and squatting over that banner headline, I'm thinking only of Wayne Flower and his brave contributions to our progressive nation.

A kid spray paints a dick on the side of a bus shelter and calls it art. The *Herald Sun* publishes stories like the ones it does and calls it balanced reporting. I can't see a distinction between the two.

CULTURAL CRINGE

JUHI CHAWLA



WITH REBECCA COOK

First it was the inherited desal plant, now they're turning their eyes to arts projects. Conceptual artists beware! While the Labor government might have loved a bit of abstract art, the new Liberal government has quickly signalled it won't put up with all with any of that 'airy fairy crap' – well, not in so many words. Last week Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Nicholas Kotsiras questioned the value for money of projects signed off by the previous government for funding from the Cultural Precincts Enhancement Fund. While he said that the Coalition had always supported investing in cultural heritage areas such as Chinatown, Lygon St, and the Greek precinct in Lonsdale St to ensure they were accessible and meaningful to future generations, "many of the costs of the projects that were approved by the previous Labor

Government appear excessive and do not represent value for money." In particular he cited a \$120,000 sculpture that was to be positioned at the southern end of Lygon Street. "The sculpture was named *Monument For Future Acts* but has been referred to as *Stairway To Nowhere*. According to the proposal when people reach the top they can 'watch the very beautiful (and cinematic) motion of the red flag flying from the rooftops of Trades Hall behind them'." The funds for the sculpture will now be redistributed to other 'worthwhile' projects, the Minister's press release stated. Cringe wonders if it had a view of the Stock Exchange or 101 Collins St whether it might have been more appealing to the new government. Now 'games', particularly when combined with the word 'industry' is clearly something that appeals to them. As they keen to talk up funding 18 local companies to attend last

week's Game Developers Conference in San Francisco. "Supporting local companies with the energy and ideas to enhance Victoria's long-term competitiveness is key in the Victorian Government's vision for the future of technology in our state," said Technology Minister, Gordon Rich-Phillips.

One project with no fear of being curtailed due to the Premier's apparent love of all things Bollywood is the Indian Film Festival (IFF), which starts this week. Now in its second year, the festival will feature more than 30 films including 15 Australian premieres as well as host some of India's most successful actors such as Vidya Balan, Juhi Chawla, and Malaika Arora Khan. This year the program will celebrate traditional Bollywood (sequins and all) as well as the depth of contemporary Indian film – described by Festival Director Mitu Bhowmick Lange as a "hugely exciting seismic, cultural shift that must be shared". Opening night audiences will get to choose between these two waves with *No One Killed Jessica*, a political thriller, and Bollywood blockbuster *Dabangg* both on offer. The festival will close with *I AM*. An innovative exploration of some of the issues facing modern Indian society, *I AM* consists of four short films based on real-life stories and connected by the central theme of fear. The film was financed by donations from more than 400 people from around the world through social media sites such as Facebook, allowing the creators the freedom to tackle normally taboo subjects. Director Omirban 'Onir' Dhar and star Juhi Chawla will be in attendance.



StreetPress Australia

inpress

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL GUIDE 2011

We're gearing up again for that special time of year when it's ok to wet yourself in public... with laughter!

That's right folks, the 25th annual Melbourne International Comedy Festival kicks off on March 30 running through to April 24 and Inpress will once again, for the 11th year in a row, be publishing the largest most comprehensive free guide to what's on, what's hot and what deserves rotten tomatoes.

With over 600,000 festival goers checking out over 300 shows, this is your chance to ride the MICF wave and let festival attendees know about your show. Comedy is thirsty work so for non-comedy festival advertisers there will be plenty of people to eat and drink or just to chill while they catch their breath.

Full colour ads at mono rates and those unable to submit finished art, we can design your ad free of charge.

The 2011 Inpress MICF guide hits the streets of Melbourne on March 30.



BIG, BOLD & GLOSSY!

DEADLINES
Artwork Deadline **March 16**

CONTACTS
Please contact :
sales@inpress.com.au or on
03 9421 4499 to book your space

BIG, BOLD & GLOSSY!

SIMON CORONEL

MANIPULATIONS

An astonishing experience of dexterity, artistry and illusion.

Plus a donkey joke.



Live at the Comedy Festival
March 30 - April 23

8:30pm, Tony Starr's Kitten Club, 267 Lt Collins St, Melbourne

\$29 Adults, \$25 Concessions, \$20 Preview Week

Bookings: 1300 660 013 or www.comedyfestival.com.au